ISSUE NO. 25 · SPECIAL EDITION

BASED ON REAL CASES · NAMES CHANGED

THE PANHANDLE

Investigator

VOTED #1 BEST OF FLORIDA & BEST OF BAY

SPECIAL EDITION

Field Files

Cold cases, hot leads and our biggest case file ever.

I-75 NORTH

Atlanta

FILE 25-07 · PAGE 18



EXHIBIT 41 · FRONT DOOR

FILE 25-01 · YULEE

Eighty Examples

The judge asked for five. Our team gave him eighty.

Front door = implied license. Walk up. Knock. Photo. Don't touch. · J.

FILE 25-03 · COLD CASE

Fresh Eyes

Two retired lawmen reopen a 26-year-old file.

FILE 25-02 · MISSING

The Man at the Bait Shop

Police couldn't find him. Jacob did.

FILE 25-04 · ORLANDO

The Long Way to Orlando

A bad back, four parks, one roller coaster.

FILE 25-05 · FRAUD

The Biggest File

3,100 pages. One hand truck.

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Eight more quick cases

ALSO INSIDE: OUR OFFICES, LIE DETECTION, BACKGROUNDS, NOTARY, BUG SWEEPS, BCLEO AND FREE SHADOW TEAM AUDIOBOOKS

FROM THE OPERATING PARTNER

Same crew. Brand-new trouble.

You liked meeting the team last issue, so they're all back, along with two people you haven't met: Jasmine, our in-house Family Social Evaluator, and Lena, who followed a lead with me all the way to Atlanta.

The big one this time is an alimony case that started in North Carolina and ended in a courtroom with a judge counting out loud. He asked for five examples. You'll see how many he got.

There's also a cold case, a missing man, a very long drive to Orlando and the biggest case file Joe has ever built. It needed a hand truck. As always, names, places and details are changed. The lessons aren't.



Jacob Nolin
OPERATING PARTNER

ABOUT THESE STORIES: Inspired by real cases from our files. Every client and subject name is invented. Places, dates and details have been changed to protect confidential information, and some scenes are dramatized for entertainment.

WHO'S WHO IN THESE STORIES

The Crew Is Back

Same investigators, same shadow team, two new faces and a whole new stack of case files.



Jacob Nolin

OPERATING PARTNER

Retired, Bay County Sheriff's Office. Finds people who don't want to be found.

Pages 4, 8, 10, 18



Joe Perrigan

ANALYST · DIGITAL FORENSICS

Built a 3,100-page file this year. Still knows where every page is.

Pages 4, 14



Jerry West

SURVEILLANCE TRAINER

Has ridden a roller coaster on surveillance. Would not again.

Pages 4, 12, 20



J.D. Nolin

CVSA EXAMINER

Retired Major. Reads a 26-year-old interview like it's this morning's paper.

Page 10



Jessica Kennedy

LEAD INVESTIGATOR, AMELIA ISLAND

Ran the Yulee end of our biggest alimony case.

Page 4



Jasmine Allen

FAMILY SOCIAL EVALUATOR

Our in-house custody evaluator. Notices what nobody else does.

Page 16

L

Lena

FIELD INVESTIGATOR

Followed the leads to Atlanta. Borrowed a dog to do it.

Page 18

W

Will

FIELD INVESTIGATOR

Sang karaoke for a case. Has not stopped singing since.

Page 22

D

David

INVESTIGATOR

Worked his first solo case. It had a twist.

Page 24

4

The Shadow Team

JERRY'S UNDERCOVER UNIT

Went fishing for a month. One of them finally caught something.

Page 20

ALIMONY & COHABITATION · NORTH CAROLINA TO YULEE

Eighty Examples

Ten thousand dollars a month, an apartment nobody lived in and a judge who asked for five examples of cohabitation. By the end of the hearing, he had written down eighty.



THE WHOLE TEAM, LED BY JACOB NOLIN AND JESSICA KENNEDY
WITH JERRY WEST, JOE PERRIGAN AND THE SHADOW TEAM

For years, a man in North Carolina sent his ex-wife $10,000 every month in alimony. We'll call her Celeste. Then Celeste moved to Yulee, just over the bridge from Amelia Island, and told the court she was living alone in a one-bedroom apartment.

Her ex-husband didn't believe it. In many states, including Florida and North Carolina, alimony can be reduced or ended when the person receiving it is living with a new partner in a relationship like a marriage. His attorney needed proof.

THE APARTMENT NOBODY LIVED IN

Jessica Kennedy, who leads our Amelia Island office, looked first. Celeste's apartment was quiet. Her parking space sat empty most nights. The blinds never moved. A pizza coupon hung on the door handle for nine straight days, and the welcome mat stayed upside down for two weeks.

"Nobody lives here," Jessica reported. "Somebody just pays for it."

THE HOUSE DOWN THE ROAD

Celeste's car spent its nights somewhere else: backed into the garage of a big house a few miles away, owned by her boyfriend. We'll call him Rhett. In the mornings, she walked his dog. In the evenings, she carried in his groceries. One Sunday, she stepped out onto his driveway in a bathrobe to pick up the newspaper.

CASE CARD · 25-01

CLIENT	A husband in North Carolina
SUBJECT	"Celeste," his ex-wife
ALIMONY	$10,000 a month
TEAM	Jacob Nolin, Jessica Kennedy, Jerry West, Joe Perrigan, the shadow team
RESULT	80 examples noted in court

CLOSED

BY THE NUMBERS

5 examples the judge asked for

80 examples he wrote down

1 empty apartment

1 bag of dog food

TWO ADDRESSES, ONE PATTERN

One overnight proves nothing. Courts want a pattern, and a pattern takes time. So the team watched both addresses at once, mornings and nights, for weeks. When the apartment was dark, the house was busy. When Celeste left for work, she left from Rhett's garage. When she came home, she came home to Rhett's garage.

Jerry West's shadow team rotated through the neighborhood so no face or car showed up too often: a jogger at dawn, a contractor's truck at lunch, a man walking a borrowed dog in the evening.

THE FILE

Back in Panama City, Joe Perrigan built the case file the way he builds all of them: every observation logged with a date, a time, a photo or video and the name of the investigator who saw it. Then he sorted it by category, because a judge doesn't want 600 photos. A judge wants to know what they prove.

Overnights. Mornings leaving from his house. Groceries carried in. His dog, walked by her. His trash cans, rolled to the curb by her. Her packages, delivered to his door. Her car, parked in his garage, opened with a keypad code she knew by heart.

THE DOG FOOD

One Tuesday morning, a big box sat on Rhett's front porch. After Celeste and Rhett both drove off for the day, one of our investigators walked up the front path, knocked on the door like any visitor would and waited. Nobody was home.

Standing at the door, the investigator looked down at the box. The shipping label was face up, in plain view: a 40-pound bag of dog food, addressed to Celeste, at Rhett's house. Click. The investigator never touched the box, never moved it, never stepped off the front path and was back on the sidewalk in under a minute.

> *"Never touched it. Never moved it. Just read the label."*

"THEY'LL THROW THAT OUT"

When the client's attorney saw that photo, he winced. "That's trespassing," he said. "The other side will get it thrown out, and then they'll use it to attack everything else we have."

HOW THE EIGHTY BROKE DOWN

31	overnights at his house	**18**	mornings leaving from his garage
9	grocery runs and errands to his house	**8**	dog walks and yard chores
6	packages delivered to his door	**4**	public posts from his kitchen
4	signs of an empty apartment	**80**	total, noted by the judge

THE IMPLIED LICENSE

Jacob Nolin and Jerry West both had law enforcement careers before they had careers with us, and they had heard that worry before. They walked the attorney through it.

In *Florida v. Jardines* (2013), the U.S. Supreme Court described what it called an implied license: any visitor may approach a home by the front path, knock, wait briefly to be received and then leave. It's why the mail carrier, the pizza driver and every trick-or-treater in America can walk up to your front door without breaking the law.

Our investigator did exactly that and nothing more. No opening the box. No peeking in windows. No walking around back. Front path, knock, wait, look down, leave.

The attorney read the opinion that night. The next morning he called Jacob. "Bring it," he said.

THE HEARING

The judge set the bar early. "Counsel," he said, "show me five examples of cohabitation."

The attorney started with the empty apartment: the pizza coupon, the upside-down mat, the blinds that never moved. Then came the overnights, one after another. The mornings. The groceries. The dog. The trash cans. The bathrobe and the newspaper. The packages.

Then the dog food photo, and the objection the attorney had been dreading. The other side called it trespassing. Our side pointed to the implied license. The judge listened to both and agreed with us: walking up the front path to knock is something any visitor may do. The photo came in.

Hours passed. The judge kept writing.

THE LEASE

The other side had its own exhibits: a signed lease, a utility bill and a photo of a couch in the apartment. Jessica had photos of that couch too. It still had the plastic on it.

A lease shows where someone pays rent. Eighty examples show where someone lives.

THE FRONT-DOOR RULE, IN PLAIN ENGLISH

1. Use the front path, like any visitor.
2. Knock, and wait briefly.
3. Note only what's in plain view.
4. Don't open, move or touch anything.
5. Don't peek in windows or go around back.
6. If nobody answers, leave.

Based on Florida v. Jardines, 569 U.S. 1 (2013). Not legal advice. Ask your attorney.

80

THE JUDGE ASKED FOR 5

Separate examples of cohabitation the judge noted by the end of the hearing.

EIGHTY

By the end of the hearing, the judge had noted eighty separate examples of cohabitation. He said from the bench that it was the most thorough and compelling cohabitation evidence he had ever seen.

Jessica Kennedy still keeps the photo of that pizza coupon on her desk. “Nine days,” she says. “Nobody opened that door for nine days.”

What the court did next is the court’s business, and we’ll leave it there. But on the drive home, the client’s attorney called Jacob. He didn’t say much. He just said, “Eighty,” and laughed.

WHY IT WORKED

No single fact won the day. Eighty small ones did, gathered lawfully, logged carefully and organized so a judge could follow them. And when the most important photo was challenged, the team knew the law well enough to defend it. (Every state’s law is different. Ask your attorney about yours.)

“The most thorough cohabitation evidence the judge said he had ever seen.”

CASE CLOSED

Eighty examples of cohabitation, one front-door photo admitted over objection and an empty apartment that finally got noticed.

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MISSING PERSON · THE FORGOTTEN COAST

The Man at the Bait Shop

His family filed a report. Police did what the law allows. But he was an adult, and adults are allowed to leave. Three months later, his daughter called us.



FEATURING JACOB NOLIN
OPERATING PARTNER · RETIRED, BAY COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Amy's father had been gone for three months. Walt was 61, a retired welder and a widower of one year. One morning, he loaded his pickup, turned off his phone and drove away.

Amy reported him missing the same day. Officers did what the law lets them do: they entered Walt into the national database, checked hospitals and jails and asked around. But Walt was a grown man, and there was no sign of a crime. Soon there wasn't much more they could do.

That's not a knock on them. It's the law, and it's why families call us.

OLD PLACES, NOT NEW ONES

Jacob Nolin started where most people don't: with photo albums. "People who run don't usually go somewhere new," he told Amy. "They go somewhere they were happy once."

Walt had grown up fishing the Forgotten Coast, the quiet stretch of shoreline east of Panama City. Old photos showed him at 12 and again at 30, holding up redfish at the same fish camp.

THE PAPER TRAIL

Amy held power of attorney for her father, and with it, his bank statements. Joe Perrigan went through them line by line. Walt's debit card had been used exactly once since he left: eleven weeks earlier, at a gas station an hour from that fish camp. Since then, he'd paid cash.

CASE CARD · 25-02

CLIENT	"Amy," a daughter
MISSING	"Walt," her father, 61
GONE	Three months
TEAM	Jacob Nolin, Joe Perrigan
FOUND	In one weekend

CLOSED

WHERE PEOPLE REALLY GO

1. A place they were happy once.
2. An old friend's couch.
3. The town they grew up in.
4. Near water. Always check near water.

SATURDAY

Jacob drove the coast road that Saturday. He didn't show Walt's photo to anybody. In a small town, a man who doesn't want to be found hears about it fast. Instead, Jacob looked: fish camps, boat ramps, motels that rent by the week and bait shops.

Behind the third bait shop, a white pickup sat under a blue tarp. Jacob could see a welding rack sticking out from under it.

A PINT OF SHRIMP

Behind the counter, a man in a faded bait-shop T-shirt was scooping live shrimp. He had a beard now, and he was thinner. But it was Walt.

Jacob bought a pint of shrimp, paid cash and said quietly, "Your daughter says happy birthday. It was last Tuesday." Walt sat down on a cooler. They talked for an hour on the back porch about fishing, grief and feeling lost in your own house.

NOT OUR CALL

Jacob didn't drag him anywhere. Walt is an adult, and coming home was his decision to make. Jacob left him a letter from Amy and her phone number and drove home.

Sunday night, Amy's phone rang.

CASE CLOSED Found safe, by choice, on the Forgotten Coast. The finding was ours. The phone call home was his.

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COLD CASE REVIEW · NORTH FLORIDA

Fresh Eyes

Two retired lawmen, a box of yellowed paper and 26 years of unanswered questions. J.D. and Jacob Nolin reviewed a cold case for a family that never stopped asking.




FEATURING J.D. NOLIN & JACOB NOLIN
BOTH RETIRED FROM THE BAY COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

In 1999, a young mother left her shift at a diner and never made it home. Two days later, her car turned up at a boat ramp miles off her route. There were searches, interviews and tips. Then the tips slowed, the detectives retired and the file went into a box.

Her sister never stopped asking questions. Twenty-six years later, she brought everything she had to our conference table: news clippings, her own notes and the records she'd been able to get over the years. She asked one thing. "Did they miss something?"

TWO KINDS OF EYES

J.D. Nolin spent years as a senior trainer in interviews and confessions before he retired as a Major. He read every interview transcript in order, slowly, with a pencil. Jacob read the file the way he reads a case today: as a map and a clock.

WHAT THE FILE WAS TRYING TO SAY

It took three weeks. Here's some of what they found.

A gas receipt from the night she disappeared, listed on an inventory sheet as "misc. paper, front seat." It was time-stamped 40 minutes after she'd left work, at a station in the opposite direction from home. Nobody had ever asked why she drove there.

REVIEW CARD · 25-03

CASE	A 1999 disappearance
CLIENT	The missing woman's sister
REVIEWERS	J.D. Nolin, Jacob Nolin
PAGES READ	About 1,200
STATUS	Reopened

CLOSED

WHAT FRESH EYES CAUGHT

1. A receipt filed as "misc. paper."
2. A tip card nobody followed up.
3. A statement that changed three times.
4. A witness nobody asked again.

THREE MORE

A tip card from the second week described a pickup truck at the boat ramp that night. There was no follow-up noted anywhere in the file.

A boyfriend had given a statement about where he was that night, three times, months apart. Each time, the times moved. Nobody had ever laid the three side by side. J.D. did.

And a neighbor had told a deputy in 1999 that she heard a truck idling outside around 11 p.m. Nobody ever went back to her. She's 71 now. When Jacob knocked, she said, "I've been waiting 26 years for somebody to ask me again."

BACK TO THE BUILDING

Their report ran 41 pages, with every item marked "known," "overlooked" or "never asked." They drove it to the sheriff's office themselves. Both men still know the way.

Two weeks later, a cold case detective called the sister. The case is open again. We can't say more than that, and we shouldn't.

"Nobody missed anything on purpose," J.D. says. "In 1999, a gas receipt was trash. Today it's a timeline."

REVIEW CLOSED A 41-page review, four overlooked leads and a cold case being worked again for the first time in years.

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INSURANCE FRAUD · PANAMA CITY TO ORLANDO

The Long Way to Orlando

According to his workers' comp claim, he couldn't stand for more than ten minutes or lift more than five pounds. Jerry West followed him to Orlando, with a few stops at parks along the way.



FEATURING JERRY WEST
SURVEILLANCE TRAINER

Duane worked in a warehouse until he filed a back injury claim. His doctor's note was very specific: no standing more than ten minutes, no lifting more than five pounds, no bending. He'd been collecting benefits for eight months.

When he told his adjuster he was driving to Orlando for a second medical opinion, the insurance carrier called us. Jerry West took the case.

THE COOLER

Duane backed out of his driveway at 5:30 a.m. with his girlfriend in the passenger seat and a 48-quart cooler in the bed of his truck. Jerry made a note. "You don't need a cooler for a doctor's appointment," he said. "You need one for a day trip."

STOP ONE: THE SPRINGS

A few hours in, Duane pulled off the interstate at a state park known for its cold, clear spring. He carried the loaded cooler down a long wooden staircase to the water by himself, rented two inner tubes and floated the spring run for two hours. Jerry rented a tube too. Somebody had to keep an eye on him, and the water was 72 degrees.

STOP TWO: THE TRAIL

After lunch, they stopped at another park and hiked a three-mile nature trail. Duane carried a backpack. His girlfriend carried a camera. So did Jerry.

CASE CARD · 25-04

CLIENT	An insurance carrier
SUBJECT	"Duane," a claimant
CLAIM	Back injury, strict limits
INVESTIGATOR	Jerry West
RESULT	Activity documented

CLOSED

THE TRIP

4 parks in three days

1 48-quart cooler

75 minutes in one line

0 doctor's appointments

STOP THREE: THE COASTER

The next morning, Duane and his girlfriend were at the gates of an Orlando theme park when it opened. They rode four roller coasters before lunch. For the biggest one, Duane stood in line for 75 minutes. Jerry was six people behind him the whole time.

That night, during the fireworks, Duane lifted his girlfriend onto his shoulders so she could see.

STOP FOUR: THE WATER PARK

Day three was a water park. Duane carried double inner tubes up seven flights of stairs, again and again, most of the afternoon. On the way home, he stopped at an outlet mall and carried the shopping bags.

THE APPOINTMENT

There was no second medical opinion, that day or that week. Jerry documented every stop with dates and times on every photo and video. His report went to the carrier, and the carrier took it from there.

"I've ridden that roller coaster now," Jerry says. "I don't recommend it with a bad back. He didn't seem to have one."

CASE CLOSED Three days, four parks, a 75-minute line and a cooler nobody with a five-pound limit should be carrying. All on video.

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The Biggest File

Seven years of books, 14,000 transactions and one very quiet bookkeeper. Joe Perrigan built the biggest case file in our agency's history. It needed a hand truck.



FEATURING JOE PERRIGAN
ANALYST · CERTIFIED DIGITAL FORENSICS EXAMINER

The client owned a family marine supply business: boat parts, rope, paint and fishing gear, sold to half the marinas in the Panhandle. Sales were the best they'd ever been. So why was there never any money?

The bookkeeper, we'll call her Marlene, had worked there for 11 years. She was quiet, punctual and trusted completely. She had never taken a vacation.

"That's usually the first thing I write down," Joe said.

SEVEN YEARS OF NUMBERS

With the owner's authorization, Joe received seven years of accounting files, bank statements and vendor records: more than 14,000 transactions. He sorted them, then sorted them again, looking for anything that didn't fit.

THE VENDOR

One vendor fit a little too well: a company called Gulf Coast Hull Solutions. It had been paid 212 times. Every payment fell between $1,800 and $2,400. The business required the owner's signature on anything over $2,500.

Nobody in the warehouse had ever heard of Gulf Coast Hull Solutions. Nobody could remember a single delivery.

> ***"That's usually the first thing I write down."***



JOE PERRIGAN: IF IT'S IN THE RECORDS, HE'LL FIND IT. THEN HE'LL INDEX IT.

BY THE NUMBERS

14,000	transactions reviewed
212	suspect payments
9	binders
1	hand truck

PUBLIC RECORDS

State business filings are public, so Joe looked the company up. It had been registered seven years earlier, at a home address. Property records showed who lived there: Marlene's cousin.

The invoices had their own problem. All 212 used the same template, with the same typo in the company's name at the top: "Gulf Coast Hull Soultions."

BUILDING THE FILE

Then came the real work. Joe tied every payment to its fake invoice, its check or transfer, the account it landed in and the date it cleared. He built a timeline, an exhibit index and a chart showing more than $400,000 in losses over seven years.

The finished file ran 3,100 pages in nine binders, with a searchable copy on a thumb drive and a 12-page summary on top. "Nobody reads 3,100 pages first," Joe says. "You give them twelve, and the twelve tell them where to look."

DELIVERY DAY

Joe delivered it to the client's attorney on a hand truck. The attorney's assistant asked if that was the whole case or just volume one. The attorney and law enforcement took it from there.

CASE CLOSED 212 payments to a company nobody had ever seen, traced through seven years of records into a 3,100-page file anyone could follow.

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CHILD CUSTODY · DESTIN

The Toothbrush Test

On paper, Dad's house looked perfect. Jasmine Allen, our in-house Family Social Evaluator, walked through it and noticed what nobody else had. It changed the whole case.



FEATURING JASMINE ALLEN
IN-HOUSE FAMILY SOCIAL EVALUATOR

In custody cases, everyone looks good on paper. That's why judges want someone to walk through the homes, read the records and talk to the people involved. At our agency, that someone is Jasmine Allen.

The case: two parents, one daughter and a fight over where she should spend most of her time. Dad's attorney painted a clear picture. Dad had the big house in a nice neighborhood, a flexible schedule and a beautiful bedroom ready and waiting. Mom had a small apartment and a job with long hours.

DAD'S HOUSE

Jasmine scheduled visits at both homes, the way she always does. Dad's house was spotless. The daughter's bedroom looked like a catalog page: a new bedspread, matching pillows and a shelf of books that had never been opened.

Jasmine noticed the small things. The dresser drawers were empty. The tags were still on the bedspread. And on the bathroom counter sat a child's toothbrush, still sealed in its package.

"A bedroom tells you who sleeps in it," Jasmine says. "This one hadn't met her yet."

REVIEW CARD · 25-06

CLIENT	A mother, through her attorney
EVALUATOR	Jasmine Allen
METHOD	Home visits, records, interviews
HOMES VISITED	Two
RESULT	Parenting plan changed

CLOSED

WHAT A HOME VISIT SHOWS

1. Is the toothbrush wet?
2. Whose drawings are on the fridge?
3. Who signs the school pickup log?
4. Are there pencil marks on the door frame?

MOM'S APARTMENT

Mom's apartment was small and a little messy. There was homework on the kitchen table, a stack of library books by the couch and a row of dated pencil marks on the bedroom door frame, measuring a little girl's height since kindergarten.

THE RECORDS

Then Jasmine pulled the paperwork. With both parents' authorization, she reviewed the school records. On Dad's weeks, the pickup log was signed, again and again, by the girl's grandmother. Teachers knew Mom by name. Most had never met Dad.

She interviewed both parents, the grandmother and the teacher, and had an age-appropriate conversation with the daughter, the way she's trained to. None of it was dramatic. All of it pointed the same direction.

IN COURT

Her report laid it out plainly, with no adjectives and no sides: who does the daily work of raising this child, and where she actually lives her life. The judge spent more time on Jasmine's report than on any other exhibit, and the parenting plan changed.

"My job isn't to pick a parent," Jasmine says. "It's to show the judge what's really there."

REVIEW CLOSED

Two home visits, one sealed toothbrush and a report that showed the court where a child's life really happens.

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INFIDELITY · PANAMA CITY TO ATLANTA

The Atlanta Address

He drove to Atlanta every other week for "regional meetings." Joe found a Georgia car registration and a deed with two names on it. Jacob and Lena followed the leads north.



FEATURING JACOB NOLIN & LENA
OPERATING PARTNER AND FIELD INVESTIGATOR

For three years, Monica's husband, we'll call him Craig, had spent every other Tuesday through Thursday in Atlanta. He was a regional manager, and the regional office was there. That's what he said, anyway.

Monica wasn't sure what she was looking for when she called us. She just knew he came home from those trips happier than he came home from anywhere else.

THE LEADS

Joe Perrigan started with public records. He found a second vehicle, a white SUV, registered in Craig's name at an address in a suburb north of Atlanta. Then he checked the county property records for that address. It was a townhouse, bought in 2021, with two names on the deed: Craig's and a woman's.

"That's not a hotel," Jacob said.

GOING NORTH

Georgia has its own licensing rules, so Jacob brought in a licensed Georgia investigator we work with. Then he and Lena packed for three days and drove north.

"That's not a hotel."

CASE CARD · 25-07

CLIENT	"Monica," a wife
SUBJECT	"Craig," her husband
TEAM	Jacob Nolin, Lena, a licensed Georgia partner
DISTANCE	About 300 miles
RESULT	Second home confirmed

CLOSED

THE LEADS THAT LED NORTH

1. A Georgia car registration.
2. A deed with two names on it.
3. Every other Tuesday, for three years.
4. A husband who came home happy.

TUESDAY, 6:40 P.M.

Craig's company car pulled into the townhouse driveway at 6:40 p.m. A woman opened the front door before he reached it. She kissed him on the porch and took his bag.

Jacob had the view from a coffee shop across the street, with a long lens and a slice of pie. Lena took the sidewalk. She'd borrowed a friendly old Lab from our Georgia partner and walked it past the townhouse twice. On the second pass, Craig waved at the dog.

WEDNESDAY

Craig never went near an office. He and the woman went to a hardware store and came out with paint, rollers and drop cloths. That afternoon, Lena watched them paint the front door red together, laughing.

THURSDAY

Thursday morning, Craig loaded his bag and drove south. He was home in time for dinner with Monica and told her the meetings had run long.

Monica got the report the next week: photos, the deed, the registration and a timeline of all three days. "The dog did most of the work," Lena says.

CASE CLOSED A second home, a co-owner on the deed and three days of documentation, from the porch kiss to the fresh red paint.

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INFIDELITY · DESTIN

Rodeo Month

Every October, Destin hosts a month-long fishing rodeo. One husband said he'd be out on the water every single day of it. Jerry's shadow team went fishing too.



RUN BY JERRY WEST
SURVEILLANCE TRAINER · THE SHADOW TEAM'S HANDLER

Boone's wife had never seen him so excited about fishing. Every October morning he left the house at 5 a.m. for the rodeo, and every evening he came home sunburned and happy. He never brought home a fish.

"He comes home smelling like sunscreen," she told us. "Not fish. Never fish."

BACK ON THE WATER

This was a job for the shadow team: the same four men who worked a condo case for us last issue, and who still won't let us print their names. Jerry West gave them new covers for the harbor.

Gator fished from the harbor boardwalk and, as usual, caught nothing. Ghost was a tourist in a brand-new rodeo T-shirt, wandering between the charter docks and the weigh station. Tank wore his reflective vest and stood near the marina parking lot looking official. Deacon jogged the harbor walk at sunrise, several times. Jerry ran it all from a truck, on the radio.

DAY ONE

At 6:10 a.m., Boone walked down the dock to a small charter boat. A woman in a wide straw hat was already aboard. She handed him a coffee and kissed him on the cheek. They left the harbor at 6:20.

THIS MONTH'S COVERS

1. Gator: the fisherman who never catches anything.
2. Ghost: a tourist in a brand-new rodeo T-shirt.
3. Tank: reflective vest, marina parking lot.
4. Deacon: the sunrise jogger, lap after lap.



JERRY WEST RUNS THE SHADOW TEAM FROM A PARKED TRUCK AND A RADIO.

NO FISH AT THE SCALES

The boat came back at 3:40 p.m. with nothing on ice. Boone and the woman in the straw hat walked right past the weigh station and climbed into her car. Tank, standing by the parking lot in his vest, had a perfect view. They drove to her condo and went inside together.

It was the same story on nine of the next twelve days. Same boat, same hat, same empty cooler.

GATOR'S FISH

On day eight, something happened that had never happened before. Gator's rod bent. He reeled in a real fish, a respectable Spanish mackerel, and the whole team cheered on the radio so loudly that Jerry had to remind everyone they were undercover.

Gator kept his composure. He also kept the fish.

THE REPORT

By the end of the second week, the client had photos of the dock, the boat, the coffee, the straw hat and nine trips to the condo. As far as we know, Boone never weighed a single fish all month.

CASE CLOSED Nine days on the water with the same woman, nine trips to her condo and zero fish at the scales. One fish for Gator.

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INFIDELITY · PANAMA CITY BEACH

Karaoke Night

The target and his girlfriend sang duets every Thursday night. To get close enough to document it, Will had to sing too. He has not stopped talking about it.



FEATURING INVESTIGATOR WILL
FIELD INVESTIGATOR · AMATEUR VOCALIST

You may remember Will from last issue's motorcycle rally. This time, his cover required a microphone.

A wife suspected her husband, we'll call him Clint, was seeing someone. Every Thursday night he told her he was "at trivia with the guys." Every Thursday night, our surveillance followed him to the same beach bar in Panama City Beach, where trivia night had been canceled two years earlier.

Thursday was karaoke night.

THE PROBLEM

The bar was dark and crowded, and Clint and his girlfriend sat at a high-top right by the stage. From the parking lot, our team could see nothing. From a table in the back, they could see the backs of heads.

To get the close-up evidence the client's attorney wanted, someone had to get near the stage, stay there and look like he belonged. In a karaoke bar, the people who belong near the stage are the singers.

WILL VOLUNTEERS

Nobody else raised a hand. Will raised both. He signed up, tipped the host five dollars and picked a country classic everybody in Florida knows the chorus to. His camera, built into a pair of glasses, rolled the whole time. Video only: Florida law requires everyone's consent to record a conversation.

CASE CARD · 25-09

CLIENT	A wife
SUBJECT	"Clint," her husband
EXCUSE	"Trivia with the guys"
INVESTIGATOR	Will, on vocals
RESULT	Affair confirmed

CLOSED

WILL'S KARAOKE RULES

1. Pick a song everybody knows.
2. Be bad, but be confident.
3. Tip the host.
4. You are the camera. Never look at it.

SHOWTIME

Will was not good. He was, however, very confident, and by the second chorus the whole bar was singing along, including Clint and his girlfriend, about six feet from Will's glasses.

Then it was their turn. Clint and his girlfriend sang a love duet, holding hands at the microphone. At the end, she kissed him, and the bar cheered.

ENCORE

Later that night, the girlfriend walked over to Will's table. They were short a third singer for a group song. Would he join them? He would. The three of them sang shoulder to shoulder under the stage lights while Will's glasses recorded every second. Afterward, Clint shook his hand. "Same time next Thursday?"

SAME TIME NEXT THURSDAY

Will came back the next Thursday, and the one after that. By then the bartender knew his order and the host had given him a nickname. The client had three weeks of video.

At the office, Will has been asked to stop singing in the break room.

CASE CLOSED Three Thursdays, two duets, one kiss at the microphone and a group song with the target himself. Will's singing career continues against our advice.

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INFIDELITY? · PENSACOLA

The Secret Lessons

Two nights a week, a pressed shirt, cologne and a phone kept face down. A wife was sure her husband was cheating. David's first solo case had a twist nobody saw coming.

D

FEATURING DAVID
INVESTIGATOR · FIRST SOLO CASE

Last issue, David was the rookie who lost a target at a red light and found him 13 minutes later. This time, Jerry handed him his first solo case and stayed on the radio in case he needed help.

The client had been married almost 25 years. Her husband, we'll call him Ray, had started leaving the house every Tuesday and Thursday at 6:15 p.m. He said he'd joined a bowling league. He wore a pressed shirt and cologne to bowling. He kept his phone face down on the table. He had never done any of those things before.

TUESDAY

David followed Ray across Pensacola to a strip mall. Ray didn't go to the bowling alley. He parked in front of a storefront with frosted windows and went inside.

An hour and fifteen minutes later, he came out with a woman. They laughed about something, and she hugged him goodbye at the door.

David's stomach dropped. He got on the radio.

"Report what you see," Jerry told him. "Don't write the ending."

"Report what you see. Don't write the ending."

CASE CARD · 25-10

CLIENT	A wife of almost 25 years
SUBJECT	"Ray," her husband
INVESTIGATOR	David, solo
BACKUP	Jerry West, on the radio
RESULT	Not what anyone expected

CLOSED

DAVID'S NOTEBOOK · CASE ONE

Tue 6:15 · leaves, pressed shirt
Tue 6:31 · strip mall, not bowling
Tue 7:46 · exits w/ woman, hug
Thu 6:30 · same place
Thu 6:35 · small sign on door?
Note: don't write the ending.

THURSDAY

On Thursday, David got close enough to read the small sign on the frosted door. It was a dance studio.

David did something smart. The studio offered free trial classes to the public, so he signed up for one and took a spot at the back of the room. Through an open door into the next studio, he could see Ray learning to waltz. The woman was his instructor. She counted the steps out loud. Ray stepped on her foot twice.

During a water break, David heard Ray tell the instructor why he'd come: 25 years of marriage in June, and a wife who had always wanted to dance at their wedding. Back then, he'd refused.

THE REPORT

David wrote exactly what he saw: the studio, the lessons, the instructor and no romantic behavior of any kind. Jacob delivered the news to the client himself, gently.

She never told Ray she knew. In June, at their anniversary party, Ray asked his wife to dance. She acted surprised. She cried anyway.

David took two more lessons on his own. He says he can waltz now. Jerry says that's still under review.

CASE CLOSED No affair. Twelve waltz lessons, one surprise anniversary dance and a rookie who learned the truth can be better than the suspicion.

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QUICK FILE · PANAMA CITY

The Boat Show

He said he'd be working a boat show all weekend. He was, for about 40 minutes. Then he and a woman from the next booth left in her convertible for a beach house on 30A. Our investigator bought a boat-show hat on the way out. It's a nice hat.

QUICK FILE · MEXICO BEACH

Inventory Night

He told his wife he did inventory at the fish house until midnight every other Friday. Our investigator watched two pizzas get delivered to his truck in a motel parking lot at 9:15. His wife says he hates pepperoni. Apparently, someone else doesn't.

QUICK FILE · FORT WALTON BEACH

Choir Practice

Every Wednesday night, she left for choir practice. The choir meets on Thursdays. On Wednesdays, her car sat in the church lot while she rode off in a black pickup for three hours. The choir director told our investigator she has a lovely alto.

QUICK FILE · PENSACOLA

The Kiss Cam

He told his wife he was taking a client to a ballgame. The client wore a sundress and his old college jersey. In the seventh inning, the stadium kiss cam found them. Several thousand fans saw what happened next. So did our camera.

EXCUSES WE HEARD THIS YEAR

Every one of them came with a time-stamped photo that disagreed.

1. "I'm doing inventory."
2. "It's a boat show."
3. "Choir practice ran late."
4. "It's a client dinner."
5. "I'm at trivia with the guys."
6. "It's a regional meeting."

QUICK FILE · NAVARRE

Expired License

He went fishing every Saturday. His fishing license expired years ago. We found him at a waterfront brunch with a woman who laughed at every joke. His wife said that was the real giveaway.

QUICK FILE · DESTIN

Sunset Walks

She walked the beach every evening at sunset, for about ten minutes. Then she walked off the beach and into a condo tower until after dark. She came home with sand on her shoes, right on schedule.

QUICK FILE · PANAMA CITY BEACH

Matching Sunburns

He came home from a golf weekend with a sunburn shaped like a tank top. Our photos explained it: a day at a beach bar with a woman who had a matching sunburn.

QUICK FILE · 30A

The Dog Walker

She hired a dog walker every afternoon, then left the house herself. The dog walker was never late. Neither was she, three doors down, where a neighbor answered the door in a bathrobe at 2 p.m.

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